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40 Years Making Health Law, Marathon Man Waxman Walks Away

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Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), co-author of the [Hatch-Waxman Act](#) that helped establish the generic drug industry and champion of many other pieces of legislation that transformed healthcare, announced Thursday that he will retire from Congress at the end of the year.

[Waxman](#), 74, was first elected to Congress in 1974, representing a district that includes Beverly Hills. He served as chair of the House Energy and Commerce

Subcommittee on Health and the Environment from 1979 to 1994, and is now the ranking member of the [Energy and Commerce Committee](#). Waxman was instrumental in the passage of the [Orphan Drug Act](#), the [Ryan White CARE Act](#), and the legislation that created the [Children's Health Insurance Program](#).

Although an advocate in the past of single-payer health insurance, he also worked with President Obama to pass the [Affordable Care Act](#). Other legislation he helped pass includes the [National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act](#), the law that established the [Office of Research on Women's Health](#) at the National Institutes of Health, and the laws establishing [FDA user fees](#).

"I take pride in my legislative accomplishments," Waxman said in a [press release announcing his retirement](#). "I took on the pharmaceutical companies that did not want competition and joined with Senator Orrin Hatch to write the law that created the generic drug industry, saving families over \$1 trillion in the last decade alone. My orphan drug legislation led to



treatments for hundreds of rare diseases."

Waxman said his reason for retirement was a simple one. "After 40 years in Congress, it's time for someone else to have the chance to make his or her mark, ideally someone who is young enough to make the long-term commitment that's required for real legislative success. I still feel youthful and energetic, but I recognize if I want to experience a life outside of Congress, I need to start soon. Public office is not the only way to serve, and I want to explore other avenues while I still can."

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